

THE PEKING-MOSCOW AXIS

Who Is Top Dog?

G. F. HUDSON

ON DECEMBER 16, 1949, two and a half months after the inauguration in Peking of the "Central People's Government of the Chinese People's Republic," Mao Tse-tung arrived in Moscow. It was a great historic occasion when the new ruler of China, fresh from the conquest through civil war of the most populous country in the world, came to pay his respects to his elder brother in the Marxist-Leninist faith, the man who was the heir of the Russian October Revolution and the conqueror of Berlin. Mao had long talks with Stalin, toured the Soviet Union, and did not get back to China until the beginning of March of 1950. On Soviet soil he could feel proud of his own achievement and carry himself as a person of real importance; he did not have to behave with humility as if he were a leader of a Communist party which had never made a revolution. His relations to the master of the Kremlin were nevertheless those of a junior to a senior, of a pupil to a teacher. His regime was less than a dozen weeks old, but thirty-two years had passed since the Bolsheviks took power in Russia; the new China looked to Moscow for instruction and advice, for material economic aid and for military protection. Mao might or might not follow Soviet recommendations in making his own major policy decisions, but he was certainly not at this time disposed to tell Stalin how to conduct Soviet foreign policy

or to explain to him the implications of Marxist-Leninist doctrine in the current world situation.

Just seven years after this visit of Mao Tse-tung to Stalin, a Chinese Communist leader again arrived in Moscow, not this time Mao himself but his Prime Minister Chou En-lai acting on instructions from Peking. Chou came to mediate between the Soviet Union and Poland after the revolts of the autumn of 1956 in Poland and Hungary had shaken to its foundations Moscow's authority in Eastern Europe and caused dismay and bewilderment in the ranks of Communism throughout the world. In Hungary, Communist rule had collapsed completely and had only been restored by Soviet tanks; in Poland, the party still held power, but under a leader who had been elevated in direct defiance of an attempt made by Khrushchev in person to prevent it, and there remained the strong possibility of a Soviet resort to force in order to crush the recalcitrant nationalism of the Poles. Both in Moscow and in Warsaw Chou En-lai played an important part in patching up a reconciliation between the Soviet and Polish leaders. It was the first Chinese intervention in the political affairs of Europe, something which could not have been imagined while Stalin was alive. But what was even more remarkable in this crisis of international Communism was the fact that the ideological pronouncements which seriously sought to analyze the causes of the recent upheavals and adapt Communist doctrine to the new situation were coming not from Moscow, but from Peking. While confusion appeared to reign in the Kremlin, the Chinese Communist party made declarations which, if far from profound, were at any rate marked by a certain clarity and com-

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prehensiveness of theoretical conception.

This increased prestige and influence of Communist China in relation to the Soviet Union has been to some extent a development which was inevitable with the consolidation of the new regime in China and the enhanced self-confidence of its leaders. But it also reflects the advantage possessed by Mao Tse-tung since the death of Stalin on account of his unchallenged personal ascendancy in China as compared with the prolonged dissensions and struggle for power in the Soviet Union—a source of uncertainty and confusion in Soviet policy which has left the authority of the Kremlin in the Communist world seriously impaired.

Mao Tse-tung is a figure comparable to Lenin in that he is the founder of the regime of which he is the head, the man who led his party to the conquest of power. He was not a successor to an authority already established; he was the creator of that authority. He holds today the position that Lenin would presumably have held had he still been alive nine years after the final victory over Wrangel. But in Russia there have been two demises of the supreme leadership, and each has been followed by a period of "collective leadership" marked by instability, dissension, and a struggle for power resulting in the emergence of a new personal autocracy. Whatever the theory of "democratic centralism" on paper, the Communist party-state requires in practice at its apex a single potentate who can be the final arbiter between cliques and factions within the party. Collective leadership simply does not work for more than a brief interval of time. On the other hand, the emergence of a new dictator evokes intense jealousy among those who were previously his equals in rank and a widespread fear of the ways in which he may use his power, particularly if party members have suffered excessively under the rule of the last boss. The contest for the succession can thus become extremely bitter with consequent dislocation and uncertainty in domestic and foreign policy. Such a critical period could in China follow the death of Mao Tse-tung, but so far the Chinese

Communists have had the advantage of a decisive personal leadership, whereas the Soviet party from the spring of 1953 onwards had to cope with the problem of the succession to Stalin's vacant throne.

THERE is no evidence of any serious conflict in Sino-Soviet relations during the three and a half years between the founding of the Chinese People's Republic and the death of Stalin. On the contrary, this was a period of close Sino-Soviet cooperation. Mao Tse-tung's visit to Moscow resulted in the conclusion of a treaty of military alliance between the two Communist powers, and this was put to the test during the war in Korea; the outcome was such as to confirm Chinese Communist confidence in Russian capacity and will to provide protection in a major clash with the "imperialists." Russia not only supplied the Chinese forces in Korea with an abundance of equipment but also, even without directly intervening in the war, gave Communist China a degree of support sufficient to deter the United States and its allies operating under the United Nations command in Korea from attempting to enforce withdrawal of the "People's Volunteers" from the peninsula by action against industries and communications in Chinese territory. Mao Tse-tung was thus enabled to carry on a major war for nearly three years against a coalition of sixteen states including three great powers, to the great enhancement of the prestige of his regime, without a single shell or bomb falling on Chinese soil. The Russians also placed their potent international propaganda machine at the disposal of the Chinese Communists, particularly for the mendacious germ warfare campaign. On the Chinese side there was an enthusiastic willingness to learn from the "Soviet experience" and a great propaganda drive by the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association to glorify Russian (as against American) technology and culture. The material economic aid from the Soviet Union was meager, but numerous Russian technicians were sent to China and played an important part in starting new industries.

After Stalin's death Communist China had no direct concern with the political jockeying for position among the "collective" leaders of the Soviet Union, but did have an interest in the stability of the Soviet regime and in the continuation of Stalin's policies of support for the government in Peking. This interest caused the Chinese Communists to favor Khrushchev rather than Malenkov in the conflict over the priority of heavy industry, for China was in need of capital goods from Russia and a large-scale switch of Soviet industry to the production of consumer goods would reduce the supplies needed for China's own industrialization. Moreover in October 1954, Khrushchev further established himself in Chinese good will by going to Peking and negotiating an agreement which restored Port Arthur and the Sino-Soviet joint-stock companies to Chinese ownership. Chinese Communist sentiment was now becoming resentful of any restrictions on national sovereignty and appreciated Khrushchev's willingness to abandon rights which even as vested in the Soviet Union had a flavor of imperialism. The determination to maintain full sovereignty in relations with Moscow also made the Chinese sympathetic to the aspirations of the European Communist satellites for greater independence, and they viewed with favor the moves made under Khrushchev's leadership to relax Soviet control in Eastern Europe, including the reconciliation with Yugoslavia. Mao Tse-tung, in spite of wishful Western predictions that he would himself become another Tito, had given unreserved support to the Moscow line as long as the Soviet Communist party kept up its feud with Tito, but when Khrushchev went to Belgrade and said that the whole affair had been a misunderstanding due to the machinations of the deceased Beria, Peking accepted the reversal of policy without demur.

In the field of domestic policy also China responded to the current trend in the Soviet Union, even though there were no directives which required conformity. Accustomed to look to Russia for the pattern of correct

Communist behavior, the Chinese Communists could not be unaffected by the new climate of relative relaxation in Russia, particularly the "thaw" in literature and scientific work. The turn of the line came later in China than in Russia; 1955 was the year of the witch-hunting campaign against Hu Feng and his followers, but by the end of the year the intimidated and brain-washed intelligentsia was being assured that those who were not counter-revolutionaries had nothing to fear from the regime and would be protected against overzealous inquisitors.

Finally, early in 1957, Mao proclaimed the famous "Hundred Flowers" policy, which appeared to introduce a freedom of thought going considerably beyond anything yet permitted in Russia. After years of the most ruthless regimentation and crushing of dissent the Chinese Communists suddenly acquired the reputation of being in the vanguard of liberalization in the Communist world. This toleration was never what it seemed, but at least in form Communist China was going the same way as the Soviet Union.

A DIFFERENCE became manifest, however, when Khrushchev went on to launch the attack on the memory of Stalin which, although delivered at a closed session of the Soviet Communist party's 20th Congress, soon became known throughout the world. It is not proposed here to speculate on the problem of Khrushchev's motives for this extraordinary performance or to go into the question whether any advance warning of it was communicated to non-Soviet Communist parties. It is sufficient to state the fact that on February 15, 1956, just ten days before Khrushchev demolished the reputation of the dead Stalin with furious invective, Chu Teh, as Chinese fraternal delegate to the Congress, read out a message from Mao Tse-tung which spoke of "the invincibility of the Soviet Communist party created by Lenin and nurtured by Stalin and his closest comrades-in-arms." Such language on such an occasion was not used lightly; it signified that Mao was upholding the old con-

ception of the "party of Lenin and Stalin." If he had not been informed of the impending demotion of Stalin, he was made to look foolish by what happened ten days later; if he had been informed, the phrasing was a protest against what was intended. In either case the policies of the Soviet and Chinese leaders had fallen apart.

In retrospect it is clear that Khrushchev's speech against Stalin was a colossal blunder. It may have been popular with the upper ranks of the Soviet Communist party which were only too well informed already about Stalin's atrocities and sought guarantees for themselves against their repetition. But elsewhere, throughout the world, its effect was to discredit the regime which now admitted to such a record, to vindicate its critics who were now proved to have been justly accusing it, and to bewilder and demoralize all those party zealots who for thirty years had seen Communism as incarnate in the figure of the Genial Secretary. Nowhere was the repudiation of Stalin more embarrassing than in China where such great efforts had been made to build up the prestige of the Soviet Union; the attack on the cult of personality was likewise deleterious to the organized adulation of Chairman Mao which fully rivaled Stalin-worship in its fulsome extravagance. The inevitable consequence of all this was a loss of confidence among the Chinese Communists in the wisdom and reliability of the Soviet leadership—doubts which were intensified when later in the year the increasing political confusion in Eastern Europe produced the major upheavals in Poland and Hungary. The Chinese now came to the conclusion that they must formulate a policy independently of Moscow for dealing with the new situation and take an active part in restoring the edifice of Communist power in Europe now threatened with collapse.

There is no doubt that Mao Tse-tung regarded the events taking place in Europe as seriously endangering the regime in China; he later declared in a speech that the news of the rising in Hungary had at once stimulated hopes of a similar overturn among

anti-Communist Chinese. What was most alarming in the situation for Peking was the apparent incapacity of the Soviet government to give a clear lead to the Communist world in a crisis which was not only a local military problem but a challenge to the Marxist-Leninist faith. The Russian tanks were effective enough in breaking the armed resistance of the Hungarian people, but Moscow's ideological artillery seemed to be firing blindly while Yugoslavia denounced the initial Soviet intervention and Poland refused to recognize the Kadar government. The main reason for the Soviet political disarray was undoubtedly the dissension of cliques within the Soviet leadership. Khrushchev, having staked his reputation on his policy of conciliating Tito and relaxing controls over the satellites, had to put the blame for the disorders in Poland and in Hungary on the past errors of their veteran party chiefs Boleslaw Bierut and Matyas Rakosi, but a strong faction in the Kremlin attributed them to the policies of Khrushchev himself which had had the effect of weakening and discrediting the Communist parties of Poland and Hungary without allaying discontent.

WITH such a controversy raging in the Kremlin it was impossible for the Soviet Union to make clear and consistent pronouncements on the crisis. Khrushchev had not yet sufficient personal authority to silence his critics, and even if he had, his incapacity for any formulation of abstract ideas precluded him from composing the kind of declaration the emergency required. It was, therefore, left to the Chinese Communists to straighten out the tangle; in Peking there was a single leader supreme over factions, and one who, whatever practical tasks he had undertaken, had always been primarily an intellectual. The *Peking People's Daily* in an article which was stated to be based on discussions in the Politburo of the Chinese Communist party, and thus had the force of an official manifesto, reviewed the course of recent events in Eastern Europe and laid down principles for judging them. By stressing the need for ap-

plication of Marxist-Leninist doctrine to national conditions, the Chinese pronouncement gave support to the aspirations of the satellite Communist parties for internal autonomy, but at the same time it dwelt on the need for maintaining the unity of the Communist camp on the basis of a common creed and drew a definite line between permissible claims to "different roads to socialism" and the heresy of revisionism.

This declaration—which was reproduced in full in *Pravda* the day after it was published in Peking—had a great influence throughout the Communist world and provided a formula for the subsequent diplomatic activities of Chou En-lai, who was sent to Moscow and Warsaw to mediate between the Soviet and Polish leaders. In Moscow, according to Polish reports, Chou dissuaded the Soviet authorities from an intention to use force against Gomulka; in Warsaw he did his best to get Gomulka to endorse the Soviet intervention in Hungary and accept Soviet "leadership" of the Communist camp. The Chinese insistence on this last point surprised the Poles, who had become accustomed to think of the Chinese Communists as their allies against Russia's pretensions to supremacy, and indeed it seemed strange that China should be thus bolstering up the Russian position at a time when Moscow had lost so much prestige as a result of recent events. But Chou argued that the Communist states must stand together in opposition to imperialism, that Russia's economic and military strength gave her a natural primacy in the bloc, and that recognition of such a primacy need not involve any surrender of sovereign rights by its other members.

The Chinese attitude was colored by the fear that Poland, under the impetus of popular anti-Russian feeling, would break away from the bloc altogether and move into a neutral position, like Tito's Yugoslavia. For Mao the right of Communist-governed nations to follow different roads to socialism did not extend to the right to be neutral in the struggle against imperialism, which was "the class war in the international field."

For this reason the Chinese Communists were sharply critical of Tito, though they still hoped for his return to the fold of orthodoxy, and a prominent member of the Chinese party visited Belgrade at the same time Chou En-lai was in Warsaw and Budapest.

THIS Chinese initiative in European affairs, which had previously been the exclusive sphere of Soviet political action, profoundly altered the basis of relations between Peking and Moscow. Mao's China had become a power whose voice was heeded by all Communists and not only by its own citizens; its interests and ambitions henceforth had to be taken into account in the making of Soviet general policies and not only on specifically Far Eastern issues. Although the leadership in the Soviet Union has been more concentrated and unified since the purge of the Presidium in July of last year, this has not restored the former Soviet possession of an exclusive initiative in the common affairs of the Communist camp. During the current year the independent initiative of China has been manifest on two issues which were not of direct concern to Peking: the new campaign against Tito beginning in May and the Middle East crisis following the revolution in Iraq in July. In both cases the Chinese Communist influence was not a moderating but an exacerbating factor in the direction of Soviet policy.

The drive against Tito followed on the Yugoslav Communist Congress at Ljubljana in April when the main points of the Titoist heresy were defiantly reasserted. Moscow had already shown its displeasure by polemical press articles and by dissuading the Communist satellite parties from sending fraternal delegates to the congress. But the Soviet attitude was still mild and indecisive as compared with the uncompromising invective of an editorial in the *People's Daily* which appeared on May 5. This virtually restated the arguments of the Cominform resolution of 1948, which Khrushchev had in effect repudiated by his attempts to placate Tito since the spring of 1955. This Chinese attack set in motion a new campaign against

Titoism throughout the Communist world, culminating in a denunciation of Tito by Khrushchev himself speaking in Sofia a month later, but even so the Soviet attitude continued to be less extreme than the Chinese. It has been suggested that the Kremlin put up the Chinese to lead the new attack on Tito because it was difficult for Khrushchev with his pro-Tito record to take the initiative in this matter. But the Chinese Communists' blast against the leader of a nation so far away from the frontiers of China was part and parcel of their own bitter persecution of "revisionism" which had been carried on since the end of the brief experiment with free speech in the spring of 1957.

By this time the tide was running strongly against revisionism all over the Communist world; the Moscow Declaration of the twelve ruling Communist parties, issued to mark the fortieth anniversary of the original Bolshevik Revolution, had denounced revisionism as now a more serious danger than dogmatism (equivalent to Stalinism) to the international Communist movement. But in China the pendulum was swinging more violently than elsewhere; all kinds of people were being accused of revisionism as the most deadly of sins, and Tito was attacked as a symbol of revisionism in the outer world. The evidence indicates that in their purgative zeal the Chinese Communists were pushing the Russians further than the latter wanted to go.

In the Middle East crisis of July, although the Soviet claim that the world was on the brink of war was artificially worked up in order to force the Western powers into an unprepared summit conference, the Soviet Union had at any rate solid ground for concern over events in a region so close to its Transcaucasian frontier. But China, with no frontier nearer than the Pamirs, went much further than Russia in provocative gestures against the United States and Britain; Peking threatened to send "volunteers" to fight together with the Arabs against the imperialists, and the Chinese press talked of American "paper tigers" whose bluff should be called by bold action. Then when Khrush-

chev showed himself willing to accept the Western counter-proposal for the requested summit conference to be held "within the framework" of the United Nations Security Council, it was presumably a Chinese protest which sent Khrushchev off on an unheralded visit to Peking and caused him afterwards to abandon the whole idea of a summit conference.

The most obvious ground for Chinese Communist objection was the presence of a delegate from Nationalist China at any meeting of the Security Council, but there is reason to believe that the original Soviet proposal for a summit conference of five powers including India had not met with Mao's approval either. It meant in effect that India would have been substituted for China as the representative Asian power in a Big Five discussion of Asian powers, and this was a precedent which could not be to China's advantage, however helpfully Nehru might have supported the Soviet line on Western intervention in the Middle East. The general direction of Peking policy during the Middle East crisis was thus to push the Soviet Union toward a more bellicose attitude than it was willing to adopt and to thwart whatever possibilities of high-level negotiation existed at that time.

THREE weeks after the visit of Khrushchev to Peking the Chinese Communists began the bombardment of Quemoy. During the month that followed the Soviet Union demonstrated its support for Mao's China, culminating in the abusive and threatening letter which President Eisenhower refused to receive. It was a notable fact, however, that the Soviet attitude did not become really tough until it had become evident that American forces would not intervene directly in the Quemoy fighting. Since Defense Minister Malinovsky accompanied Khrushchev to Peking, it must be assumed that the projected operations against Quemoy—the build-up began in July—were discussed, and the absence of any attempt to capture the island by assault suggests a Russian refusal to cover China against the possible consequences of

such a commitment of forces. It was probably hoped to reduce Quemoy by blockade, but improved methods of supply by sea and Nationalist superiority in the air—due largely to the provision of American Sidewinder missiles to the Nationalists—frustrated this aim. The offensive against Quemoy was thus militarily a failure, but politically, by provoking a new strain on American-British relations, dissensions over policy within the United States, and tension between Washington and Taipei, it achieved a certain degree of success which was a gain for both Soviet and Chinese Communism.

Part of the motive for both the Chinese bellicosity over the Western interventions in Lebanon and Jordan and the offensive against Quemoy has certainly been to arouse Chinese patriotic and anti-imperialist sentiment in support of the regime at a time when the drive for "leaping progress" in industrialization and the establishment of the ultra-collectivist "people's communes" has been imposing unprecedented strains in-

ternally on the Chinese nation. The new line in social and economic policy represents a victory of the party zealots and extremists over the more moderate planners of the state bureaucracy and it necessitates a phase of acute tension comparable to that in Russia during the crucial period of economic transition between 1928 and 1933. Communist China may not want a major war during such a period, but it is unlikely either to want an international détente; the Chinese people must as far as possible be reconciled to their lot by being made to believe in an imminent imperialist threat. Whatever tendencies may recently have existed in the Communist camp toward a genuine reduction of tension in world affairs, the influence of Peking is likely for a long time to come to be adverse to them. The Chinese People's Republic today stands for Communism in its most extreme, rigorous, and uncompromising form, and the mantle of Stalin rests on the shoulders of Mao Tse-tung rather than of Khrushchev.

ROSES FOR MY GRANDMOTHER

LAURENCE JOSEPHS

THE gardens of her mind where she most
often lived
Amidst all useful fruits and grains,
Were fair pavilions raised beneath sweet
glass:
Like breads, like cookies shaped to lily for a
holiday.

She, planter, gardener to a palace—Solomon's
perhaps—
Endowed such monuments as in me echoed
strength:
My hunger satisfied, my eyes in brimming
million leaves
With spring through all the year my single
childhood season.
But useful, useful: that one blade

Of grass, that only leaf, that carven apple
never went astray.
Always and by magic turned to worshipful
design.
Such tribute made one child a prince; made
me that prince.

Thus at the finish when a winter grew
Like death into the orchards of her time,
I brought her useless roses of a luxury
She never understood but lay in reckless
awe.

We wept for love of beauty, she and I,
And in her thanks there was no bread or
food.
A perfume filled the kitchens of her soul
Where even thorns were beautiful to her.

LAURENCE JOSEPHS, a native and resident of New York City, has published verse and criticism in other periodicals, including the *New Yorker* and *Poetry*, but appears here for the first time.